

## MINUTES – JANUARY 7, 2010

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Caswell County Senior Center in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 7, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a joint planning session with the Board of Education, Piedmont Community College, Yanceyville Town Council, and DEEDS Organization. Members present: George W. Ward, Jr., Chairman, Erik D. Battle, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies, and Gordon G. Satterfield. Absent: Kenneth D. Travis. Also present: Kevin B. Howard, County Manager.

Mr. Will Lambe, Director, Community Campus Partnership, with the School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, facilitated the meeting and provided the following summary.

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, approximately 45 local leaders from Caswell County came together to discuss issues affecting development in the county and the priorities for organizations in the county. Five organizations were represented at the meeting: (1) Caswell County, (2) Town of Yanceyville, (3) Piedmont Community College, (4) Caswell County Schools, (5) Dillard Education and Economic Development Services (DEEDS). An attendance list is attached to this memo.

The meeting was planned and facilitated by UNC's Community-Campus Partnership, at the request of Dr. Bartlett and Mr. Howard. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- A. Identify issues that may affect development in Caswell County in the next 2-3 years
- B. Share organizational priorities for development in the county
- C. Identify emerging development projects in the county
- D. Identify new partnership opportunities for leaders and organizations in the county
- E. Identify volunteer working group of local leaders to set priorities and implement partnerships

### **I. Welcome, dinner and introductions**

The meeting started with dinner and an informal discussion question. Participants were asked to answer and discuss the following question at their dinner table: *What activity or accomplishment has happened in Caswell County since last January of which you are most proud?* Responses included:

- Construction of Caswell Senior Center
- Development of welding shop at high school
- Achievement of testing benchmarks in all Caswell County Schools (for first time in a long time)
- New restaurants including Azariah's, a mexican restaurant and Bojangles
- Grant funds (up to \$1.8m) awarded to PCC to support dislocated workers in the county

## **II. Brief remarks from select leaders (County, Town, PCC, School District, DEEDS)**

Following dinner, a representative from each organization was given five minutes to outline the priorities/issues facing their organization this year.

*Kevin Howard*, Caswell County Manager, discussed the need for organizations in Caswell County to avoid competing with one another for grant funds. Mr. Howard suggested that development projects in the county would be more likely to secure outside funds if they were approached more collaboratively.

*David Parrish*, Yanceyville Town Manager, discussed the town's focus on a water line extension for emergency use in the town. Availability and supply of ample water is a major priority for Yanceyville. A second priority for the Town is resurfacing and aesthetic upgrades on the downtown square. Mr. Parrish and others have had several meetings with DOT about resurfacing and various pedestrian access issues on the square. At least one grant has been submitted to DOT.

*Walter Bartlett*, President Piedmont Community College (PCC), discussed the need for a new roof on the college's facility in Caswell. A second priority for PCC is to secure new space for the college's law enforcement training center. Dr. Bartlett views this as a significant economic development project for the county because the training center attracts people into town where they spend money on food and retail. He also emphasized that under his leadership, PCC will make it a priority to plan strategic programs that meet the needs of residents in the county.

*Douglas Barker*, Superintendent Caswell County Schools, began by announcing that the new welding/technology shop at Bartlett Yancey High School will open in March. In terms of current priorities, Dr. Barker discussed the school system's focus on safety and technology. He mentioned the need for video and computer services within the schools. Dr. Barker suggested that one idea for collaboration in the county might be to think about how to share technical assistance for high-tech equipment in schools and other organizations. A second set of priorities for the schools is to attract and retain quality teachers to Caswell County. The county also needs affordable housing that suits professional teachers.

*Lionel Parker*, Board Member DEEDS, discussed the history of the Dillard School in Caswell County, an 80,000 square foot school building which originally served as the segregated school for African Americans and then as the integrated middle school in the county. DEEDS recently renamed the school the "Caswell County Cultural and Heritage Center." In the immediate term, DEEDS is focusing on securing funds for a new roof, HVAC repairs and asbestos removal in the building. Mr. Parker elaborated on several programmatic opportunities that might be offered at the Dillard School building including a STEM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Math) program, an early college program, sports, recreation, theatrical productions, and others.

## **III. Small group discussion**

Following a break, meeting participants reconvened in four small groups of approximately 10-12 individuals. Small groups were asked to consider the following three questions. Responses from brainstorming discussion are listed in no particular order.

1. *What are the key development issues facing leaders in Caswell County in the next 2-3 years?*

- a. Job creation
- b. Workforce development
- c. Infrastructure
- d. Need for an economic development plan/vision
- e. Economic development capacity (econ dev director for county)
- f. High speed internet
- g. Public transportation for seniors and rural residents
- h. Education enhancement
- i. Availability of healthcare providers
- j. Availability of entertainment opportunities
- k. Availability of recreation
- l. Availability of youth resources
- m. Availability of water (Yanceyville)
- n. Availability of hotels and restaurants
- o. Assistance with grant writing

2. *What one or two development projects in Caswell County are priorities for you or your organization this year?*

- a. Develop a clear sense of Caswell County's competitive advantage to draw new visitors and keep residents in the county
- b. County-wide capital improvement plan
- c. Identify potential spaces for economic development
- d. Facility spaces for local programs and services
- e. Building repairs, especially roofs (DEEDS, PCC, Guilford Mills, H.S. East Wing)
- f. Development of new recreation facility
- g. Downtown storefront development
- h. Small business incubator
- i. CDBG grant to address housing stock in section of Yanceyville
- j. "First Fridays" event on the downtown square
- k. Detention center
- l. Film industry
- m. Entrepreneurship development
- n. Tourism and cultural resources development
- o. Enhance agricultural businesses

3. *What issues or projects from your discussion are most appropriate for a joint or collaborative effort this year? The projects listed below are those that were reported out from each group:*

- a. County-wide facilities assessment/inventory and plan for building repairs
- b. Educational spaces for adults and youth (PCC, Schools, County, Town, DEEDS)
- c. Water line development (Town, County)
- d. Housing (Town, County, PCC, Schools)

- e. High-speed internet (County, Town, DEEDS, PCC, businesses, telephone and cable companies)
- f. First Fridays celebrations in downtown Yanceyville (Town, County, PCC, DEEDS, Schools, Sheriff, etc)

#### **IV. Next steps**

Mr. Howard concluded the meeting with a request that each organization select two or three representatives for a working group. The working group will aim to meet again in 30 days or less and begin setting priorities and moving projects forward. UNC will continue to support local initiatives through the Community-Campus Partnership.

#### THE ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

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Wanda P. Smith  
Clerk to the Board

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George W. Ward, Jr.  
Chairman

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